

Attitudes to and knowledge about
ethical issues:
Results from a survey among Danish
Psychiatrists

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Background

- In 2010 the Danish Psychiatric Association established an ethical committee
- The aim of the committee
 - Advising the Board in ethical issues
 - Monitoring ethical aspects of psychiatric research
 - **Identifying issues of ethical concerns**

Overview of the knowledge of ethical issues among Danish psychiatrist

- First survey at the annual meeting in 2011
 - Knowledge about the Madrid Declaration
 - Attitudes towards ethical issues in clinical practice
- Second survey at the annual meeting in 2012
 - Knowledge about WPA's recommendations about collaborating with the pharmaceutical industry
 - Attitudes towards ethical issues in the contact with the pharmaceutical industry

Respondents	2011 (N = 112)	2012 (N= 91)
Specialist (private clinic)	8 %	4 %
Consultants	63 %	51 %
Specialist in hospital	5 %	3 %
Residents	14 %	29 %
Other doctors	7 %	7 %
Medicin students	4 %	7 %

Knowledge of the Madrid Declaration

	In general (1. survey, only clinical working, N=100) %	Conflict of interest in relationship with the industry (2. survey, N=91) %
Never heard about it	34	33
Know its existence	43	44
Some knowledge of it	19	18
Know it well	4	4
Missing data	0	1

The WPA

- **10. Conflict of Interest in Relationship with Industry:**
- Although most organizations and institutions, including the WPA, have rules and regulations governing their relationship with industry and donors, individual physicians are often involved in interactions with the pharmaceutical industry, or other granting agencies that could lead to ethical conflict. In these situations psychiatrists should be mindful of and apply the following guidelines.
- **1.** The practitioner must diligently guard against accepting gifts that could have an undue influence on professional work.
- **2.** Psychiatrists conducting clinical trials are under an obligation to disclose to the Ethics Review Board and their research subjects their financial and contractual obligations and benefits related to the sponsor of the study. Every effort should be made to set up review boards composed of researchers, ethicists and community representatives to assure the rights of research subjects are protected.
- **3.** Psychiatrists conducting clinical trials have to ensure that their patients have understood all aspects of the informed consent. The level of education or sophistication of the patient is no excuse for bypassing this commitment. If the patient is deemed incompetent the same rules would apply in obtaining informed consent from the substitute decision maker. Psychiatrists must be cognizant that covert commercial influence on the trial design, promotion of drugs trials without scientific value, breach of confidentiality, and restrictive contractual clauses regarding publication of results may each in different ways encroach upon the freedom of science and scientific information.

Possibility to discuss ethical problems in clinical practice

First survey (N=116) %

	No	Partly	Very much	Don't know	Not relevant
With colleagues	6	57	35	0	2
With nursing staff	6	40	46	0	8
Part of training	5	36	50	2	7

Ethical problems related to clinical practice

First survey (N= 116) %

	NO	Partly	Very much	Don't know	Not relevant	Non responder
Lack of beds	10	29	36	2	22	1
Lack of out-patient care	8	55	22	3	11	1
Relation to relatives	6	74	17	2	1	0

Ethical problems related to use of force

First survey (N=116) %

	No	Partly	Very much	Don't know	Not relevant	No resp
Forced admission	16	35	33	7	7	3
Forced treatment	16	41	23	8	10	2
Forced ECT	8	28	46	9	8	2
Forced treatment of somatic ill.	10	34	35	14	7	1
Forced admis. / treatm. not done	3	54	25	10	4	2
Forced follow-up	20	28	16	27	9	2

Do you have ethical consideration in relation to contact with
the pharmaceutical industry?

Second survey (N= 91) %

No	4
Partly	36
Very much	0
Don't know	50
Not relevant	10

Is ethical considerations in relation to contact with the industry part of your training/guidance of trainees?

Second survey (N=91) %

- No 20
- Partly 60
- Very much 9
- Not relevant 12

Is ethical considerations in relation to contact with the industry part of your training?

Second survey (N= 26)

- First year residents (10 persons)
 - No 5 (50 %)
 - Partly 5 (50 %)
- Other residents (16 persons)
 - No 5 (31 %)
 - Partly 9 (56 %)
 - Very much 1 (6 %)
 - Not relevant 1 (6 %)

What is your opinion about the pharmaceutical industry sponsoring the annual meeting?

Second survey (N=91) %

- That is all right 68
- Problematic 23
- Should not be so 1
- Don't know 3
- Missing data 5

Has it changed your ethical considerations about the relationship to the pharmaceutical industry to fill in the questionnaire? (N=91) %

- No 57
- Partly 34
- Very much 3
- Not relevant 1
- Missing data 5

Conclusions

- The knowledge about the current ethical declaration is not satisfactory
- The psychiatrists are aware of ethical issues in their clinical practice
- Most psychiatrists have the possibility to discuss ethical issues with colleagues
- Conflict of interest in relationship to industry seems to have little attention
 - There is a need for intensifying the discussion of ethical issues in the training of residents

Aknowledges

The members of the ethical committe

Marianne Kastrup (chairman)

Anne Lindhardt

Anne Grethe Viuff

Morten Ekstrøm

Johan Øhlenschlæger

Bodil Andersen